

Drawing Conclusions: Detecting Character Traits

3rd–5th Grade

Objectives

- Students will draw conclusions about a person's character traits based on information in a reading passage.
- Students will identify character traits and provide evidence to support their conclusions.

Materials Needed

- "Phone Plan" reading passage
- Chart paper
- Blue ribbon reproducible
- Novel or selection the class is currently reading

Procedure

1. Explain to students that authors often give us clues about events that are going to happen in a story. Good readers are able to use those clues to draw logical conclusions. In addition to giving clues about events, authors also give clues about a person's character, by telling what the person says and does. Ask students a question such as, "What conclusion might you draw about a person who frequently digs his hands into his pockets and frowns as he kicks the dirt and grumbles to himself?" Invite students to share their ideas, which might include that the person is angry, frustrated, pouting, or moody.
2. Tell students that they are going to sharpen their detective skills by drawing conclusions about characters from information they find in a reading passage.
3. Give each student a copy of the "Phone Plan" reading passage. (You can also display a copy on an overhead projector or write the story on chart paper. Then students can choose to follow along by reading their own copy or by watching as you track the reading with a pointer.)
4. Assign the roles of Chris and Mom to two volunteers. Give them a few minutes to read through their lines before you begin. Then ask the class to follow along as the volunteers read the passage.
5. Ask students to think of words to describe Chris (e.g., forgetful, responsible, thoughtful, hopeful, and so on). Write the words on chart paper. As students supply character traits, ask them to give examples from the passage that illustrate these traits. If you have displayed the passage on a projector or chart paper, underline the clues in the story as students identify them.
6. Now have students describe the mother's character traits. Underline the clues in the story that lead students to these conclusions.

Independent Practice

1. Tell students that you'd like them to apply the same detective skills to identify a character trait in one of the characters from a book they are currently reading in class. (Or you can have students analyze a character from a book that they are reading or have recently read on their own.)
2. Provide each student with a copy of the blue ribbon reproducible. Have students choose a character and write down the character's name. Then prompt students to list one trait of that character, along with two clues that support that trait. Have students record the page numbers where these clues can be found.
3. Display the students' completed blue ribbons on a bulletin board titled "Detecting Character Traits!"



Phone Plan

Mom: Chris, your birthday is coming up. What do you think you want?

Chris: I think a mobile phone would be great. I could take it wherever I go!

Mom: Mobile phones are nice. But I think you're still a little too young to have one, dear.

Chris: But Mom! Lots of my friends have phones, and they're the same age as I am.

Mom: Just because your friends have phones, that doesn't mean you need to have one. You have to be responsible when you own a cell phone.

Chris: I am responsible! I turn in my homework every day!

Mom: I know. I'm proud of you for that. But do you remember when you lost your lunch box a few weeks ago? And before that, you lost your jacket. I'm just worried that if I get you a phone, you'll lose it.

Chris: I promise I won't lose it! I'll keep it in my backpack when I'm at school. I'll keep it in my pocket or my backpack when I go anywhere else. And when I'm at home, I'll leave it on my desk. I'll always know where it is.

Mom: Those are all good ideas. But why do you really need a cell phone? You can call your friends on our home phone whenever you want to.

Chris: There are lots of good reasons for me to get a phone.

Mom: Alright, tell me why I should get you a cell phone.

Chris: First, if we go to the store and I get separated from you, I can call you and find where you are. Second, what if my teacher needs me to stay after school? I can call, so you won't end up waiting in the car and wondering where I am. Third, all kinds of other emergencies might happen. It would be great to have a phone to call for help!

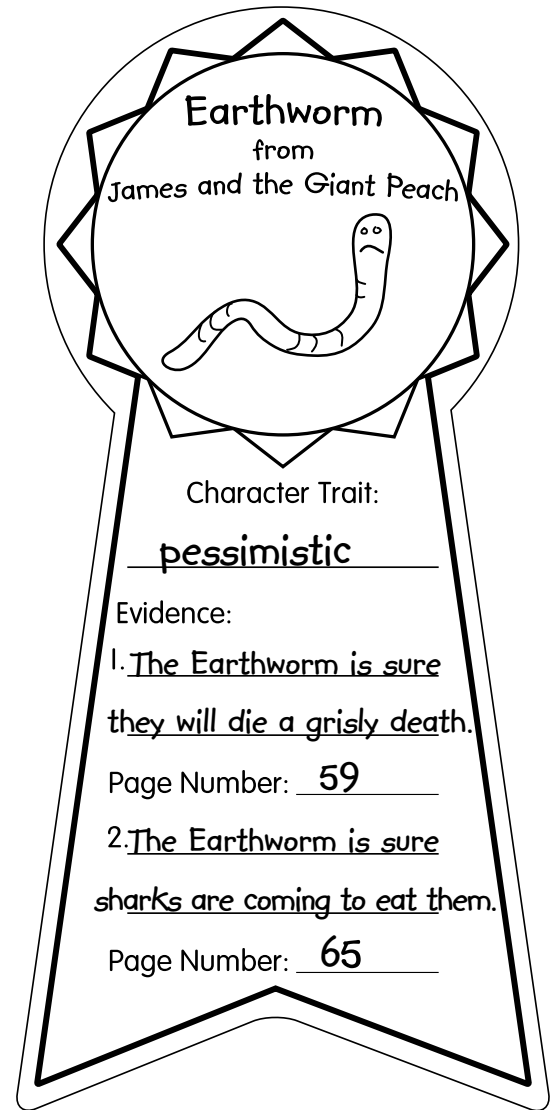
Mom: Those are some good reasons. I agree, there could be times when a phone might be pretty helpful. There are other things to think about, though. Phones cost money! Plus, it costs money every month to use a cell phone.

Chris: I can earn money to pay the monthly bills! I'll do extra chores around the house like sweeping the floors. I can make extra money walking the neighbors' dogs. I can also collect plastic bottles and aluminum cans and take them to a recycling center.

Mom: You've sure thought this out. I'll talk it over with your dad. We'll see what your birthday brings!

Character Blue Ribbon

Example:



Character Trait: _____

Evidence:

1. _____

Page Number: _____

2. _____

Page Number: _____